

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 20, line 29, through page 21, line 8 with the following rewritten paragraph:

Further, the ratio of the hot storable amount in the NO_x storable amount A_b increases along with a rise in the temperature T_C . At the above temperature T_a or more, the NO_x storable amount A_b and the hot storable amount become substantially equal. That is, at the cold side, mainly cold storing is performed. When the temperature T_C rises and the NO_x storing catalyst 11 becomes active, the ratio of hot storing gradually increases. At the hot side, mainly hot storing is performed. That is, in this embodiment of the present invention, specifically, cold storing is performed even when the NO_x storing catalyst 11 is activated. Therefore, for example, the expression of "cold storing when the NO_x storing catalyst 11 is not activated" or "hot storing when the NO_x storing catalyst 11 is not activated" is intended to merely simplify the expression and is not intended to exclude the case of cold storing when the NO_x storing catalyst is activated.